

Campaigns

49%
of the UK population travelled
by air last year

TARGET GROUP INDEX SURVEY OF 25,000 PEOPLE

Security issues will not prevent air action



Tough times at airports last month do not mask long-term issues

Rights for flyers

AIR TRAVEL

Airlines faced horrendous issues in August just getting planes off the ground in the UK security clampdown. We appreciate they dealt with customers as well as they could in the circumstances.

Despite that we still believe in general they are using a whole raft of dubious excuses to duck out of giving you food, paying for phone calls or refunding you if a flight is cancelled. That's the bottom line of the many emails you sent us, when we asked you to monitor the progress of a recent EU regulation.

The regulation, which came into force 18 months ago, was designed to give consumers a fair deal by requiring all airlines to compensate passengers for delayed or cancelled flights under certain conditions.

But it's clear from your emails that the law is not working. It's also clear that airlines are skirting round it – as EasyJet did when it wriggled out of compensating Nathalie Gibbins by blaming cancellation of her flight on bad weather, whereas in fact it had failed to provide a crew (*Which?*, July 2006, p7).

Airlines don't have to compensate you if a flight's cancelled because of a security alert. But we want to ensure consumers are aware of their rights under all other circumstances, know how to get what's due and are not fobbed off by excuses. So we've joined forces with *Holiday Which?* to bring you our 'Flight rights' online action pack. We've used what you've told us to put together tips on how to get redress at the airport as well as how to deal with common excuses. Our *Which?* Legal Service lawyers have drafted letters you can use if an airline refuses compensation or assistance, and there's a handy card with details of your rights for you to download free. (The card is also available by phone: call 0800 252 100 and quote 'Flight rights'.)

The European Commission is to review the law this autumn. Worryingly, the industry is already trying to get it watered down or even scrapped. Your experiences will help our case when we submit evidence. For a copy of our action pack and to tell us your experiences, visit which.co.uk/flightrights.

CAMPAIGN NEWS

Estate agents forced to amend unfair terms

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has made 25 estate agencies amend or remove unfair contract terms, following referrals from *Which?* In April 2005, we asked the OFT to investigate the contracts of 29 agents which we found breached the Estate Agents Act or Unfair Contract Terms Regulations (*Which?*, May 2005, p10). Of the four instances not upheld, the OFT said it couldn't find anything unlawful in one of the contracts and that it had dealt with others collectively because some estate agents were members of the same group.

The firms worked with the OFT to amend the contracts, so their names don't have to be made public. Even so, the

changes are good news for consumers. This result shows that our legal powers under the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations have real clout – and that feedback and examples from you really do help make an impact.

Home information packs rendered useless

Which? has withdrawn its support for home information packs after publicly condemning the government's decision not to make the home condition report mandatory.

Which? saw the home condition report as pivotal. Without it, potential buyers will be unable to make an informed decision upfront about whether to buy, which could lead to costly mistakes.

MEMBER BENEFIT

Great savings with Hughes Direct

Exclusively for *Which?* members, Hughes Direct is offering big savings on all the Best Buy PVRs in this month's report (p60). You can save at least 10 per cent on the high-street price published by *Which?*. The Humax model comes with a two-year warranty. And if you order a Sky HD package through Hughes Direct before the end of October, your name

will be entered in to a prize draw. The winner will be reimbursed the £300 purchase price (see the Hughes Direct website for more). Log on now to www.hughesdirect.co.uk/which or call 0845 6780084. The offer is valid until 31 October 2006.



Every month thousands of *Which?* members take advantage of great prices available from Hughes Direct. All goods are guaranteed to be a minimum of 10 per cent below high-street prices published in *Which?* product reports (even taking into account delivery charges). In the unlikely event that you find the same product cheaper elsewhere (including delivery) within seven days of purchase, Hughes Direct promises to refund 110 per cent of the difference. This is a terrific deal for *Which?* members. Call now or go online to see how much you can save.